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A SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.*

BY ALFRED NOYES.

I.

HE needs no crown of ours, whose golden heart
Poured out its wealth so freely in pure praise
Of others; him the imperishable bays
Crown, and on Sunium's height he sits apart:
He hears immortal greetings this great morn!
Fain would we bring, we also, all we may—
Some wayside flower of transitory bloom,
Frail tribute, only born
To greet the gladness of this April day,
Then waste on death's dark wind its faint perfume.

II.

Here, on this April day, the whole sweet Spring
Speaks through his music only, or seems to speak;
And we that hear, "with hearts uplift and weak,"
What can we less than claim him for our king?
He is here on earth, and many a hawthorn-time
Spring shall return and find him singing still;
But, ah! his heart is far beyond the years,
One with the pulsing rhyme
Of starrier heavens that work their rhythmic will
And hold the secret of all human tears.

III.

For he—the last of that immortal race
Whose music, like a robe of living light,
Reclothed each new-born age and made it bright

* Algernon Charles Swinburne, born April 5th, 1837.

As with the glory of Love's transfiguring face,
 Reddened earth's roses, kindled the deep blue
 Of England's radiant ever-singing sea,
 Recalled the white thalassian from the foam,
 Woke the dim stars anew
 And triumphed in the triumph of Liberty—
 We claim him; but he hath not here his home.

IV.

Not here: round him to-day the clouds divide!
We know what faces through that rose-flushed air
Now bend above him; Shelley's face is there,
And Hugo's, lit with more than kingly pride!
Replenished there with splendor, the blind eyes
Of Milton bend from heaven to meet his own:
Sappho is there, crowned with those queenlier flowers
Whose graft outgrew our skies,
His gift; Shakespeare leans earthward from his throne
With hands outstretched. He needs no crown of ours.

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